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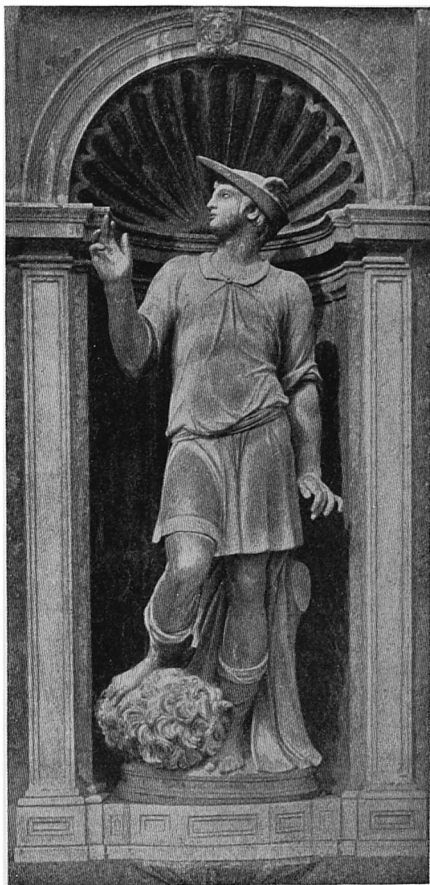
ITALY'S LAW TO PROTECT HER ART TREASURES

That the Italian authorities are resolved to protect the artistic interests of the state in the most practical manner is shown by the measures they have recently adopted, a résumé of which is herewith given.

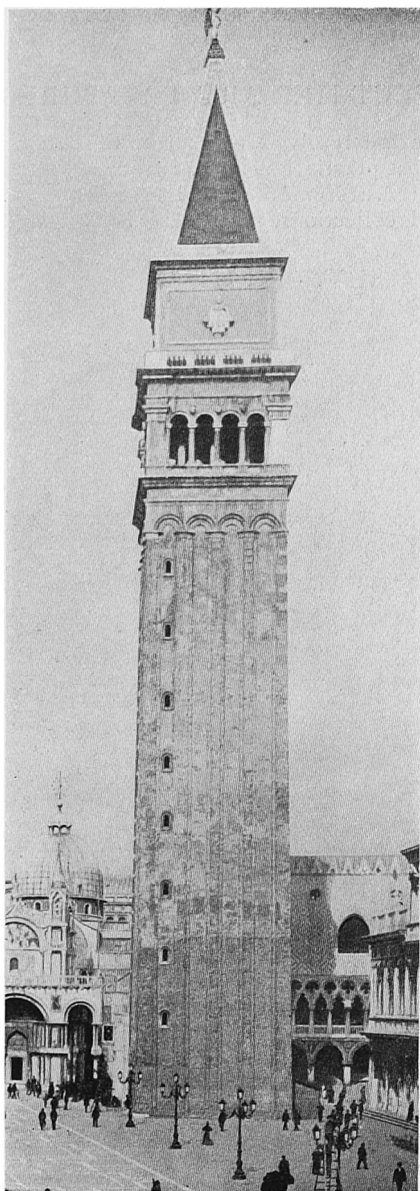
All artistic or archæological collections, monuments, or isolated artistic objects, belonging to the ecclesiastical authorities and to corporations recognized by the state, cannot be sold out of the country, and can only be sold in Italy by one religious or public authority to another, or to the state, with the permission of the government.

A general catalogue of pictures, monuments, and archæological objects is to be drawn up, one part of the catalogue to include the objects and collections belonging to the above-mentioned corporations and authorities, and the other to include all objects and collections belonging to private owners, provided that these collections are considered to be of high artistic value.

Objects not included in the catalogue may be sold, but only with the permission of the Minister of Public Instruction. Owners of objects registered in the catalogue must immediately notify the Ministry of Public Instruction in case of sale or change of ownership. Sellers must always



MERCURY
By Sansovino



THE CAMPANILE OF ST. MARK'S

warn buyers when an object they are about to purchase is registered in the national catalogue.

The government will always have the right of pre-emption, under equal conditions, in case of such sales, but the right must be exercised within six months of the notification that a sale is contemplated. When the right is exercised in regard to an object for which an offer has been made from abroad, the price will be fixed by deducting the export duty from the amount offered.

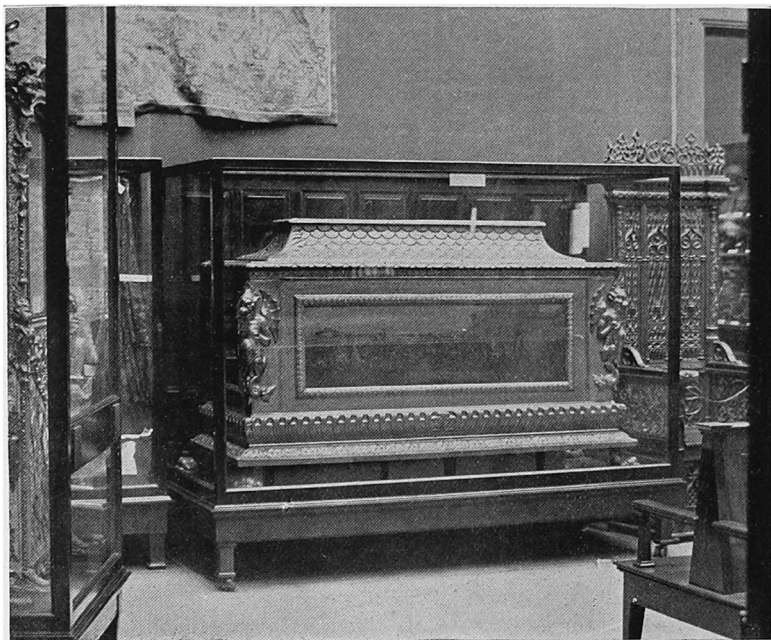
The export duty is progressive, and amounts to five per cent up to the first £200 of the price, seven per cent on the next £200, nine per cent on the third £200, eleven per cent on the fourth £200, and so on until the maximum of twenty per cent is reached for costly objects. Article 8 of the law contains a provision which, if properly applied, would stop the practice of declaring the value of an object to be infinitely lower than it really is.

Exporters of valuable pictures and other objects, which may be worth say £6,000, will often declare their value to be £115 or £120, not so much in order to avoid payment of the export duty (which will, in any case, be paid by the

foreign purchaser) as to avoid arousing the suspicion of the government experts that a good picture may be going out of the country. It does not say much for government experts that, in order to tell a valuable picture from a worthless one, they should need to see a high declaration of price; yet this is frequently the case, and during the last few years many a valuable work has easily obtained a permit for exportation because its value was declared at £12, instead of £12,000.

Article 8 of the new law says, however, that the government will have the right to buy all objects for which permission to export is requested at the price declared by their owners, less the export duty. The purchaser of a valuable picture will think twice before declaring its value to be only a few pounds, because he will know that in case of suspicion he would be bound to accept the few pounds, less five per cent, from the government as the price of a picture for which he may have given £1,000.

A. P.



WEDDING COFFER, FLORENTINE
One Type of Italy's Treasures